

A Paper on the Medals known as Ramtinkis.—By J. GIBBS, F. R. G. S.,
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(With Plate No. VI.)

In the note I read before the Society in April last on Ramtinkis, I intimated my intention of writing at greater length as soon as I could collect more materials. Since then I have been home and visited the British Museum and made inquiries there, and also from collectors of Indian coins, including Sir Walter Elliot, but regret that I have not been able to add much to the information I already possessed. I unfortunately missed General Pearce who had been for some time in Southern India, and who had made a collection of these medals—but from what I have since heard from Dr. Bidie, I do not think his collection will be found to differ much from my own. Dr. Da Cunha in Bombay has obtained some six or eight, but they all, save one, resemble some of my own specimens, the exception is a small and very much worn specimen which from the hurried glance I was obliged to be contented with, seemed different from any I had met with; it was about an inch or an inch and an eighth in diameter, cup-shaped, but so rubbed that it was almost impossible to make out what was on it. I have since then had four sent me for inspection only, by my friend Rao Bahadur Trimulrao Venktesh from Dharwar; one of these is a half and the other three are quarter Ramtinkis; they all are of a similar description to the electrotype from Mysore, No. 5 in plate VI; the three quarter pieces were all alike, but two not in such good condition as the third. The following list will show those I have, together with some other varieties I have met with—their weights, diameters, and, in the case of those engraved—the plate and number.

No.	Description.	Quality of Gold.	Reverse.	Owner.	Diameter in inches.	Weight in grains.	Plate.
1	Double.	Good.	Plain.	J. P. Watson	$2\frac{1}{5}$	1,485	
2	Whole.	Pale, silver alloy.	Plain.	J. Gibbs	2	696	
3	„	Very good.	Hanumán in a rectangular space.	„	$1\frac{15}{16}$	690	Pl. VI. No. 2.
4	Half.	Pale, silver alloy.	Plain.	Bombay Branch R. Asiatic Society	$1\frac{1}{2}$	364	
5	„	Good.	Hanumán nearly effaced.	Name unknown	$1\frac{1}{2}$	349	
6	Quarter.	Pale, silver alloy.	Plain.	J. Gibbs	$1\frac{1}{6}$	180	

No.	Description.	Quality of Gold.	Reverse.	Owner.	Diameter in inches.	Weight in grains.	Plate.
7	Quarter.	Pale, silver alloy.	Plain.	J. Gibbs	$1\frac{1}{8}$	160	
8	"	Pale.	Hanumán.	"	1	166	Pl. No. 4.
9	"	Very good.	Hanumán.	"	$1\frac{1}{2}$	160	" No. 3.
10	"	Good.	Hanumán.	"	$1\frac{1}{2}$	196	" No. 1.
11	"	"	Hanumán.	"	$1\frac{1}{4}$	193	" No. 6.
12	"	"	Seated Hanumán in double Δ in \bigcirc and \square with ornaments.	Name unknown	1	159	
13	"	Electrotype.	Hanumán.	Mysore Museum.	$1\frac{1}{8}$...	" No. 5.

In Southern India these medals are thus distinguished—

(1.) The whole, or 'Ramtinki Varáha', supposed to be 4 tolas in weight or 720 grains.

(2.) The half or Ramtinki Pratápa, supposed to be 2 tolas in weight or 360 grains.

(3.) The quarter or Ramtinki Dharana, supposed to be 1 tola in weight or 180 grains.

In the following descriptions *obv.* stand for the concave; *rev.* for the convex or back.

No. 1. *Obv.* DOUBLE. Two divisions. *Upper.* Ráma seated with Sítá on his left, umbrella-bearer on his right. Two figures to Sítá's left; sun and moon over Ráma's head; remains of a figure to umbrella-bearer's right and traces of arabesque border.

Below. Hanumán in the middle, facing right, traces of a figure to his left; to his right three monkeys, very indistinct. Very coarse work and much rubbed.

Rev. Nothing visible. *Much worn.*

No. 2. *Obv.* WHOLE. Four rows of figures. In uppermost Ráma with Sítá to his left. Other figures on both sides but very indistinct. The three other rows contain monkeys; in the centre of the second row Hanumán kneels below Sítá.

Rev. Plain.

This specimen has been much rubbed and battered about having been used for many years in temple worship (see below).

No. 3. *Obv.* WHOLE. Two rows of figures. *Upper.* Ráma in centre, on his left a standing figure which from

the dress may be Sítá, two more figures, males, to her left; on right of Ráma umbrella-bearer and two other figures. Sun, moon and stars above the figures, an arabesque border and a dotted one above it. *Lower.* Hanumán kneeling on right centre, facing left, a monkey on left centre and figures of men flanking both.

Rev. Hanumán standing in centre of a circle which is surrounded with double squares interlaced, which are again enclosed as a circle. Scroll ornaments fill in the interstices. (Pl. VI, No. 2.)

The work is rather poor, but the medal is in good preservation.

No. 4. *Obv.* HALF. Three rows in the style of No. 3, but very indistinct.

Rev. Plain.

This has been much rubbed. The late Mr. W. E. Frere, C. M. G. procured it about 35 years ago in the Southern Mahratta country.

No. 5. *Obv.* HALF. Two divisions, *Upper.* Ráma in centre with Sítá on his left knee. Two figures to her left, the first with a chauri, three figures on the right of Ráma, the nearest holding umbrella. These figures appear as set in a frame with arabesque border at the top. *Lower,* parts of four figures on right of centre. Two, a monkey and a bear on left.

Rev. The faintest remains of Hanumán, much rubbed.

This was sent me for inspection only from Dharwar.

No. 6. *Obv.* QUARTER. Same design as last, but only one row of figures.

Rev. Plain.

Very much rubbed; similar in work to Nos. 5, 7, 13.

No. 7. *Obv.* QUARTER. As the last, but position of figures slightly different, more like No. 13.

No. 8. *Obv.* QUARTER. Ráma and Sítá seated on a throne. She on his left. Three figures to her left and four to his right, the first on the left has the umbrella and the first on the right the chowri. Arabesque ornament on edge. Moon and sun over Ráma. Below them in *exergue* Hanumán, under Ráma, and apparently 3 Balbodh letters, but not legible.

Rev. Hanumán standing, surrounded by, apparently, an inscription, but the letters cannot be read.

This is very nearly flat—(Pl. VI, No. 4).

No. 9. *Obv.* QUARTER. Resembles *obv.* of No. 3.
Rev. Hanumán in middle standing in a circle, an inscription round, but not readable.

No. 10. *Obv.* QUARTER. *Upper portion.* Ráma seated on a throne, with Sítá on his right, he has his right arm raised. Three monkeys on his left. Four men on right, the nearest holding the umbrella. Arabesque border. In *exergue* 2 lines of apparently Balbodh letters but imperfectly formed. It has been suggested that they may be intended for

श्री	रा	म	प्र	स	न
Srī	Rá	ma	pra	sa	nna
	१	९	१		
	1	9	1		

“Srī Ráma prasanna 191

“May Ráma bless” or “be propitious” ... 191

Rev. Hanumán standing in a square within a circle, holding a club with its knob downwards, an inscription in imitation Nagari letters but from which nothing can be made out. (Pl. VI, No. 1.)

No. 11. *Obv.* QUARTER. Similar in style to last, but figures reversed, Sítá and four men on Ráma’s left who has his left hand raised. Umbrella as usual, on right three monkeys. Hanumán very small at Ráma’s feet. In *exergue*, bastard Nagari letters not readable.

Rev. Hanumán as in the last, letters on the sides of the parallelogram and outside the circle, but not readable. (Pl. VI, No. 6.)

No. 12. *Obv.* QUARTER. Ráma with Sítá on his left knee, three figures on each side, on Sítá’s left, umbrella-bearer, a man, a monkey; on Ráma’s right the chowri-bearer, a man, a bear, in *exergue* 4 letters illegible. Florid ornamentation over Ráma.

Rev. Hanumán seated in middle in a double triangle in a circle and that again in squares, ornaments of dots and marks in the corners all enclosed in another circle.

No. 13. *Obv.* QUARTER. Ráma and Sita. Three men to his right, two to her left. Grotesque monkeys below.

Rev. Hanumán with an illegible inscription round him. Very imperfect. (Pl. VI, No. 5.)

This is an electrotype from one in the Mysore Museum.

The story on them all, illustrated to a greater or less degree, is that of Ráma and Sítá, on their reconciliation and her having proved her purity after being seized and taken off to Lanka by Rávaṇa, and is taken from the Rámáyana. The rows of figures are composed of men and monkeys, the latter forming part of the army of Hanumán by whose means Sítá was rescued. In all the large ones, Hanumán is represented standing or kneeling in the centre of the row below Ráma and Sítá, and holding up a flower to them: in the smaller, he alone sits just below Ráma and his consort. Sítá in some is represented on Ráma's lap, in others seated by him on the *gadi*; the attendants have chowries and the umbrella. The monkey in the same row with Ráma and Sítá is Sugriva the king of that tribe to whom Hanumán was adviser. In some the figure of a bear appears; this is intended to represent Jámbavat, the king of the bears, who with his army also aided Ráma in his attack on Lanká.

As none of these medals have any dates or any legible inscriptions, the determination of their age becomes a matter of great difficulty. From all I have been able to learn these pieces were never used as coins. At first, finding that there were 3 sorts, whole, half, and quarter Ramtinkis, and that the weight of each sort was in correct proportion to the others, I was inclined to think they might have been coins, but I have now come to the conclusion that they are medals struck apparently for purely religious purposes. They are highly venerated in Southern India and most families of respectability there have one or more; they are also kept in temples and used in the daily worship. They have been known for very many years, and in the absence of any actual evidence of their date I have been led to seek for any traditions which may exist, and the following has come to me from a trustworthy source.

In about the 9th century A. D., there flourished a famous Reformer of the S'aiva sect named S'ankaráchárya, who travelled about the country chiefly in Southern India and founded '*maths*' or hermitages in various places; amongst others at Sringeri near the source of the Toombudra river, Koodalji in the Holehonor Taluka of the Seomoga division, in the Mysore territory, Sunkeshwar in the Chikkodee Taluka of the Belgaum Collectorate, Humpi in the Hospet Taluka of the Belary District, and some in Gujarat, one of which was I believe in Surat. In the course of time the subordinate Swamis became independent, and some of them very rich. The last Swami but one of Koodalji was one of these, and had a gold throne on which he sat to receive his disciples and followers. It was customary among these followers to make large gifts to the shrine, in which were idols, images of Ráma, Krishṇa, S'iva, &c., which, as well as the apparatus for performing the worship, were

made of gold or silver—and part of the worship consisted in bathing the idols daily in milk, curds, ghi, sugar, honey, fruits, and then in water, after which they were bathed in gold, which is done by pouring over them handfuls of gold coins such as Ramtinkis, Huns and other Hindu coins; these coins are kept specially for this use and are deemed to be sacred, and although as a favour they may be shown to Europeans, none can touch them but the priests.

I do not know how it came about, but the later Swamis at Koodalji lost much of their property, and during the famine of 1876-77 disposed of the remainder of these treasures, and amongst other things mortgaged three Ramtinkis—which according to tradition had been handed down from Swami to Swami from the foundation of the '*math*' in the 9th or 10th century A. D.—to a banker, with the stipulation that if not redeemed within six months they should become his property: the time elapsed, and a year or so after my old friend Rao Bahadur Trimulrao, who was connected by marriage with the banker, heard of them and purchased them for me. They are those numbered 2, 6, 7 in the above list. They have been much knocked about from temple use, the large one especially; they are highly alloyed with silver, and are in consequence very pale in colour. The largest is a whole Ramtinki and has rather the look of having been cast, not struck. Nos. 6 and 7 are quarters and one of them is almost exactly similar to the electrotype from the Mysore Museum, specimen No. 13.

If we can trust the tradition above alluded to, these medals may be 800 or 900 years old, and the similarity between No. 6 and No. 13 would point to an early date also for the original of the latter.

With regard to the other varieties, I can form no opinion as to their real age, but I am inclined to consider all but No. 8 modern, that is not over 100 to 150 years; one exactly resembling No. 6 was shown me by a Bráhmaṇ in Poona, who said he knew it had been worshipped in his family for over 70 years, and might have been for a far longer time.

The large double one No. 1 is of very coarse work, but of pretty fair gold, it is much rubbed and belongs to Mr. J. P. Watson in Bombay.

I classify the medals I have met with in 3 descriptions:

- a. Those of very pale gold heavily alloyed with silver.
- β. Those of pure gold or nearly so with very fine work.
- γ. Those of pretty good gold and coarser work.

Under a come Nos. 2, 4, 6, 7

„ β „ Nos. 3, 9,

„ γ „ Nos. 15, 10, 11, 12

No. 8 varies from all, being of pale gold but fine work.

From the many inquiries I have made from natives regarding these medals, I have invariably found that they consider the paler gold the more ancient.

When I was in Poona some 6 or 7 years ago, the chief Sankarácharya passed through on one of his religious tours, and hearing that he had with him a remarkable Ramtinki I paid him a visit; he was a particularly pleasant spoken gentlemanly person, and had his gold shrine set with rubies and emeralds valued at 2 lacs of Rupees erected for my inspection, and also many of the jewels of his '*toshakhana*' set out; on my asking for the Ramtinki, a priest produced a box wrapped in several covers, and after opening cover after cover a bundle was taken out in which on being opened, appeared the Ramtinki; the priest took it in his hand and held it for me to look at, and it was very like No. 2 in the above list, but I think rather larger, and had 5 rows of figures; it was of pale gold and remarkably deeply cup-shaped, it had evidently been much used and was therefore rubbed and knocked about. I could not get its weight or its diameter; so I had to trust to my eye to assess them.

Dr. Bidie of Madras has sent me drawings of several in the Madras Museum.

The following is a description of them:

No. 1. *Obv.* WHOLE. *Flat.* *Upper.* Ráma and Síta seated with six figures in two rows on each side. *Lower.* Hanumán in middle standing, indistinct figures on each side of him.

Rev. 2 Interlaced squares with ornaments in the interstices with a lozenge-shaped centre, round which appear unformed letters. The subject in the lozenge is not traceable. Wt. 677·3 grs. Diam. $1\frac{1}{6}$ in. Madras Museum.

No. 2. *Obv.* QUARTER. *Flat.* Two figures on a platform in the middle, umbrella over them, a figure on left with a Lion rampant below it, ornaments and apparently letters.

Rev. *Upper.* Eight figures in a row, each holding a lance with a wreath or a torch on it.

Lower. Marks which are said to resemble part of the Muhammadan creed and the word "Sindhya." Wt. 189·2 grs. Diam. $1\frac{5}{6}$ in. Madras Museum. *Very rude work.*

No. 3. *Obv.* QUARTER. *Flat.* Much the same as *obv.* of No. 2, no lion but a monkey on left.

- Rev.* Four figures on a platform with their left hands raised, an umbrella in centre, arabesque border. Wt. 160·4 grs. Diam. 1 inch. Madras Museum. J. Gibbs.
- No. 4. *Obv.* WHOLE. Very similar to that of Pl. VI, No. 2.
- Rev.* HANUMÁN standing in a circle which is enclosed in interlaced squares with ornaments in corners. Wt. 662·7 grs. Diam. $2\frac{1}{16}$ in. Madras Museum.
- No. 5. *Obv.* DOUBLE (?) Somewhat similar to No. 4, but work rather more in relief.
- Rev.* 5 lines of what appear to be unreadable letters divided by bands of ornament. This belongs to a banker at Vellore, who gives its weight at 30 pagodas: a pagoda is said in the money tables to weigh $52\frac{1}{2}$ grs., if this is correct the piece must weigh $52\frac{1}{2} \times 30 = 1,575$ grs. or more than double a single Ramtinki.

Nos. 2 and 3 of these are not in my opinion Ramtinkis, they are, I believe, specimens of the modern medals struck at some of the great places of pilgrimage in Southern India. One similar to No. 2 was described and depicted in the Proceedings of this Society for 1882, having been exhibited by General Pearce. I have one which resembles No. 3, having only four figures on one side, but having on the other two standing figures on a sort of dais with a man on the right and a monkey on the left.

I have seen several of this latter description: they are of very inferior workmanship, and of no pretensions to age. Mr. Scott at Tanjore showed me one he had, and I have seen another in the possession of a native gentleman at Calcutta, who looked upon it as an object of great veneration, and paid a very large sum for it. It has the same device as No. 3, but was of even rougher work and exactly similar to Mr. Scott's.

I must not conclude this paper without alluding to Marsden's notice of these medals. He appears only to have seen quarter Ramtinkis and those in the illustration in Pl. XLVIII are of the ordinary descriptions. These, as all his other coins, are now in the British Museum, where, until the Chief of Vinchore, at my suggestion, sent home a whole Ramtinki, they had none but quarters in the collection, the one sent home was a duplicate of No. 2 in Plate VI.

I consider these medals to have been struck as votive offerings, their weight varying perhaps in accordance with the wealth or status of the donor or donee. I regret I have not been able to get more accurate information regarding them, but I trust that this article with its illustrations may lead to the Society or myself obtaining further information on the subject.



1



1



2



3



3



5



4



5



6



AUTOTYPE